



The MilAtari Ltd. Edition

The Milwaukee Area Atari User's Group

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Price \$2.00

IMAGE SCANNERS, THE NEXT SERIOUS STEP FOR ATARI DESKTOP PUBLISHING



Actual unretouched picture captured by IMG Scan™ and imported directly into Publishing Partner.™ Inside, David Mumper takes a hard look at the most inexpensive scanner available for any computer on the market.



From the President The Rain, the Park and Other Things...

Hi everybody, I just want to tell the people who could not make the picnic how well it went !!! First off, we must have had someone looking out for us because we had sunny skies for the picnic. It started to storm about an hour after the picnic was over--talk about timing! Second, there was a lot of food. Let me thank those people who answered my call for goodies. Were there things to give away! I'm still hoarse from calling out numbers! Again, our thanks to all the software companies and businesses for their generosity. I cannot tell you how happy it made me to see all the work we put in to something like this pay off. And this is only the beginning if I have anything to say about it (and I do !!!).

Now, a couple of other things that are going to happen in the next couple of months. The club is starting it's membership drive in September. This includes a contest to see which member brings in the most new members. The winner will get a \$50.00 gift certificate. In order to win you must have brought in the most new members (minimum of five (5) new members). The contest will run to December, so there is time to get all your friends together and bring them down to a meeting. We are also going to start doing some group buys on selected software. This is for members only!!! We are doing this because there are some good older pieces of software people just can't get anymore even if they knew the software was out there.

IS THE ATARI 8-BIT DEAD ?

I don't think so! There is less software being produced, but what is being put out is top quality stuff. Is MilAtari supporting the 8-bit machines? The answer is yes !!! I want to make it perfectly clear. Every member on the board of directors is committed to supporting all the Atari machines and all of our members. I owned an Atari 800 for two years before I sold it to buy my 520ST. I have been told that because all of the board members own ST's that we are not supporting the 8-bit computers. Well I just want to let everybody know that most of the people on the board of directors own BOTH machines.

The bottom line is; if you need help DO NOT BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR IT !!! The reason why I am telling you to ask for help is that is the only way we know you need it. There is a tremendous amount of knowledge among the members of this club that can be shared, but I would look mighty stupid if I called or asked every member if there is anything that I could help them with. We are always trying to make this club better for you, the membership, but a user group is only as good as it's membership. I would like members who have problems to please talk to me at the meetings and I will try to fix any problems that I can. If I can't be of help, it's a good bet that I know someone who can!

Broderbund Software is coming in to demo some of their new software at our October meeting, so please plan on being there. For the September meeting we have lowered our disk prices across the board, the details are listed elsewhere in this newsletter.

Well, that is about all for this month. I hope to see all of you at the meeting with your feedback and comments.

Bruce Welsch - President
MilAtari Ltd.

Over 250 Atari Computer Owners in SouthEast Wisconsin, plus up to an additional 500 Atari computer users in the USA, Canada, and Overseas see this newsletter every month. Can your computer related business afford NOT to be here? If you deal in products or services that are of interest to owners of the Atari line of Personal Computers, or the interests of computer users in general, you owe it to yourself to find out just how cost-effective direct local advertising can be. Details are available on the inside back cover of this newsletter.



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The MilAtari Ltd. Edition

September MilAtari Meeting *(a.k.a. You don't want to miss this one!)*

Next MilAtari Ltd. Meeting - Saturday, September 19th @ 12:00 Noon
UWM Campus - Curtin Hall - Room 175

For those of you who haven't been to our new meeting place, Room 175 is UWM's new auditorium/language translation facility! See program demos on six TV monitors from the comfort of your seat!! Separate SIG and library areas! Plus, it's easy to get to! Take I-43 to Locust, Locust East to Downer, and head North on Downer. Curtin Hall is on the West side of Downer Avenue midway between Kenwood Blvd. and Hartford Avenue. Piece of cake! There's even a sign out front! If you need more directions, call any of the numbers on the inside back cover. We want to see you!! By the way, contrary to popular belief, there is NO parking problem around UWM on Saturday!

Next MilAtari Board meeting: Sunday, September 27th @ 7:30pm
Shakey's Pizza - 96th & National - West Allis

Coming to our October Meeting:
Reps from Broderbund Software with Demos & ?
Make plans now to attend!

Announcing: For September Only!! **The MilAtari Disk Blowout!!** **Check out these prices!!**

8-Bit

MilAtari Public Domain Library Disks: Normally \$4.00 - Blowout Price: \$2.50!!
Blank 5 1/4" Floppies - DSDD - Bulk: Only \$4.00 for a pack of 10!!

ST

MilAtari Public Domain Library Disks: Normally \$5.00 - Blowout Price: \$3.50!!
Blank 3 1/2" Microflopies - DSDD - Bulk: Only \$10.00 for a pack of 10!!

These prices are in effect during the September meeting only!!

The fine print: These prices are available to MilAtari Ltd. members only! Your dues must be current, so make sure you bring your membership card. Non-members may sign up at the meeting. At these prices the normal "Buy 3, get 1 free" DOES NOT APPLY. Both full PD libraries will be at the meeting. We've got a lot of stock, but when it's gone, it's gone! No dealers please! Absolutely all proceeds go to support MilAtari Ltd.



Thank You!!

This year's annual MilAtari picnic was an unqualified success. As you may have noticed, it didn't quite make the pages of the Social Register, but a lot of people had a darn good time! Our hats are off to all the club members who participated, and needless to say we are already looking forward to next year. The entire membership is indebted to all the businesses, both local and national, who made contributions of prizes and other items. For those of you who were unable to attend, the generosity of these companies allowed us to be able to raffle off over \$500.00 worth of software and promotional items. Each and every one of the companies listed below went out of their way to show their support for MilAtari Ltd. Corporate support for user groups is alive and well, and we ask the entire membership to return the favor whenever possible. Again, on behalf of the entire membership of MilAtari Ltd., our sincere thanks and deepest gratitude to the following companies and the individuals who represent them:

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Mr. Bill Holt
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Mr. John Samster
4040 N. 126th St.
Brookfield, WI

To the best of our knowledge as this issue goes to press, the above is a complete and accurate list of the corporate sponsors of the MilAtari Ltd. picnic. We apologize in advance if there have been any omissions and if they are brought to our attention, the appropriate acknowledgements will be made in our next newsletter. Thanks again to all our corporate sponsors. [Ed.]

Image Scanning Made Inexpensive An ST Hardware Review by David Mumper

Up until now, in order to get images from a printed page into your ST, you would have had to spend around \$500 to get a good video digitizer and video camera. Recently however, Seymour-Radix has released a new image scanner that really allows for inexpensive image acquisition. Assuming you already have an ST and a graphics compatible printer, this \$99.95 addition is all you need, besides a little patience, to begin scanning pictures.

For the \$99.95 price, you will get a cartridge that has 2 fiber optic cables to connect up to your printers print head, and a disk with 2 versions of the software for image scanning (one is for low res and the other is for monochrome.) The cartridge itself is the least impressive of the digitizers that you can find now, but teamed with the software, and the fact that the cartridge is 'slow scanning', the results are about the best I've seen.

To set the scanner up, all you have to do is plug it into your cartridge port (with the computer off please) and get the cables connected to the printhead of your printer. The company suggests, and supplies, masking tape, but I found that something like Tack'em, used for sticking posters on your wall, works better with my Epson FX-100's print head. The program itself drives the print head, and requires only one special command for the printer. The program is very flexible, and has the ability to adjust how long it waits for the printer to scan a line, return to the beginning of the next line, and start moving. One drawback is that the program prints a period at the beginning and end of each line, so you will leave marks on the paper even without the ribbon in your printer.

The software itself is very easy to use. Working in the low res version, you have the ability to set which of the 256 grey levels are assigned to each of the 16 colors, or have the program assign them itself depending on the values being returned from the scanner. At any point during the scan, you can stop the program, re-adjust the gray level assignments, and resume the scan. You can also change the color palette within the program so you can 'colorize' the pictures as you scan them.

For adjusting the color separations, you have a couple major options. First off, you can position the picture so that the area of highest contrast is under the scanner and choose the 'calibrate' option to have the program select the optimum color divisions. As the picture is being scanned (this is in low res only) you can stop the scanning, and change the contrast using the + and - options, adjust the brightness, using the < and > options, or just grab the division line between any two colors and drag it right or left without bothering any other colors.

Both programs allow you to save the pictures in either low or monochrome resolutions, and the low resolution program also allows you to save it as raw

data, which contains the gray level (from 0-255) for each pixel on the screen.

Now, nothing is ever perfect, and this is also true of the IMG SCAN software. The software I have is numbered V1.2 for low res, and V1.0 for monochrome, and the main complaints I have are aimed at the monochrome version, and are actually the differences between V1.2 and V1.0.

1. The monochrome version doesn't have the ability to recalculate part of a scanned picture if you find, 1/4 the way through the picture, that you have the threshold set too high (causing the picture to be too dark.) This option is included in the low res program.

2. You can't save the raw data from a scanned monochrome picture. (Could these 2 problems be caused by the program not keeping the raw data???) Again, this is included in the low res program.

3. When looking for source material, you should know that it works better with non-glossy, black and white pictures. It works best with photocopies of almost anything. Other things that work well are coloring books, but be careful, the kids may make you buy your own to use.

4. The length of the cables limits the distance between the computer and printer to under 4 feet. This may cause problems with some people.

5. It takes 7 minutes for a color scan, and 14 minutes on a monochrome scan on my Epson FX-100. If your printer is faster, then the scan times can be decreased, by changing the configuration.

Overall, keeping in mind the restrictions on the type of picture to work from, I personally prefer the IMG SCAN over any of the other digitizers currently available for the ST. For under \$ 100.00, it's one of the best hardware additions you can buy for your ST.



Low Res IMG Scan picture converted to mono with Degas Elite. Imported directly into Publishing Partner and reduced by 65%.



Accolades for Accolade

"Ace Of Aces" - An 8-bit review by Tom Johnson

ACE of ACES by Accolade Software
Fighter-Bomber Airplane Simulation
Atari 400/800 XL, XE - 48k Min.
Overall Difficulty - Medium
Overall Rating - Excellent
Price - \$24.00

Recently I went browsing through my favorite software store looking for new releases. That's when I came across Accolade's Ace of Aces.

With the title Ace of Aces and the picture of a WWII plane on the box, a Mosquito, you instantly know it's a fighter plane simulator. At this point I wasn't too thrilled. I thought, like you're probably thinking now, oh great, another airplane game. There can't be more than two or three bunches of these on the market already.

I then picked up the box to see what, if anything, makes this different from all the rest. On the back panel are three pictures. The first picture is of the cockpit, the second is of the bombardier's view, and the third is of the left wing and engine. Also, according to the pictures on the box, the graphics look great. I was not disappointed. No longer is the plane simply a group of square blocks leaving the details to your imagination. For example, you actually see fire coming from a burning engine, smoke coming from exhaust pipes, working gauges, props turning, flaps moving and all too often bullet holes in the windshield. Although the graphics on the box are from Commodore screens, the Atari version is quite similar.

Obviously I bought it. My second decision was to read the instructions before trying it. This didn't take long because there are only twelve 5x7 pages. The docs have many pictures and are written very well in easy to understand, concise language. One of the best things about this game is you don't spend a lot of time learning commands but learn how to fly the plane in short order.

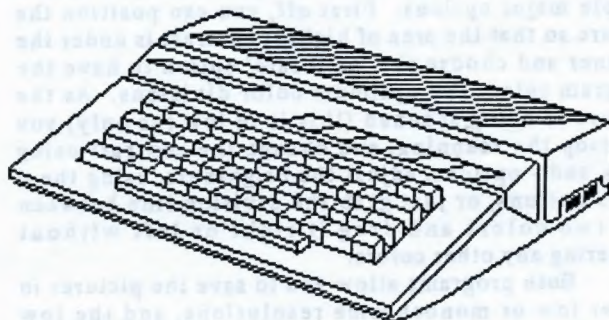
Speaking of the plane, there are few things you should know. First, since it's a twin engine prop plane it doesn't fly as fast as the jet in F-15 Strike Eagle. Nor does it have afterburners to help you out of close encounters with the enemy. Also, it doesn't have heat seeking missiles. In order to shoot down the enemy you

must first get him in your sites by maneuvering your aircraft and then fire either a rocket or machine gun at him. You get double points for hitting targets with rockets. This is because they are slower and therefore harder to judge when to fire at a moving target. As stated earlier, the plane consists of more than one section. You don't just sit in the cockpit shooting during this game. There are views of the cockpit, map, left and right wings, bombardier and navigator's view. Each of these sections has some of the controls, easily controlled by the joystick, needed to navigate the airplane. These controls may be damaged during combat making them useless.

The game has a couple of options available to you at the start. The first is the practice or mission selection. I suggest the practice choice at first to get used to the controls and graphics. As I said earlier, it won't take long to learn how to fly the plane. Accolade did a good job of making this game easy to learn and play. The second choice would be to choose the missions option at the beginning. You are then asked if you want to seek one or all of the four choices. Your four potential missions are enemy trains, fighter planes, missiles, and submarines. Of course the more you choose to go after, the harder the game gets. To become the Ace of Aces you must choose all four missions, succeed at them and return to your base safely. Next, you decide how much and of what type of ammunition will be loaded onto the plane. The choices are fuel, rockets, bombs and machine gun rounds. The amount of each will vary depending on the type mission selected. After completing your choices you're ready for a brief intelligence report and take off.

Don't expect to become an ace in only a few missions. So far I've not defeated the enemy. In fact I think buying the enemies military would be cheaper for the British than having me crash all of their planes. I'm showing improvement however. It now takes longer for the enemy to shoot me down. Usually everything on the plane is damaged before I lose her. Sometimes I even fly long enough to run out of fuel.

If you enjoy airplane simulators, for example F-15 Strike Eagle, this game is a must. It will provide you with many hours of fun and challenge.





Batter Up! - Play Ball!!

HARDBALL! - An 8-bit review by Jonathan Bloy

HARDBALL! by Accolade Software
Arcade Style Baseball Game
Atari 400/800 XL, XE - 48k Min.
Overall Difficulty - Medium
Overall Rating - Excellent
Suggested Retail \$29.95

In need of some new entertainment, I went to the software store and picked up HARDBALL. Once I got home and booted the program, I was not disappointed.

You start the game by choosing the options you want: The team (the All-Stars or the Champs), which will be the home team, and if you want a designated hitter or not. After these choices are made you can start the game or make changes in the roster. Each team is made up of a starting lineup, and a bench, which includes 9 relief pitchers and 7 various fielders. Once play begins this game really begins to shine.

The main playing screen is a zoom lens shot from centerfield with the pitcher in the foreground and the batter, catcher, and umpire in the background. The graphics are a real treat here, as is the animation, from the pitcher's windup and delivery to the batter's swing. In the corner of the main playing screen is a window which displays a birds eye view of the playing field, in order to keep track of the base runners. Once a pitch has been hit the screen shifts to a press box view of either the left or right half of the playing field, depending on where the ball was hit. This can be a bit confusing when you first play HARDBALL, but after a few games it becomes quite natural.

Okay so the game looks great, but how does it play, you ask? Excellently. All playing commands are executed through the joystick (no fumbling for the proper keyboard commands), in a manner which is very easy to learn. Players choose the type of pitch to throw, direction of the pitch, what direction to hit, whether to steal, bunt, etc. all from a menu at the bottom of each screen.

I must stress again; the graphics and animation are excellent. Base runners slide into bases in a cloud of dust. Curveballs, sinkers and other pitches move in a manner which is excitingly accurate. With the batter standing almost 2 inches high (on a 13 inch monitor) the strike zone is very easily seen, although you'll wonder why you swung at some obvious sucker pitches. Also

impressive is the almost limitless way the ball moves after it is hit. Line drives can fly along the foul line and be inches fair or foul, Texas leaguers can bounce wildly over the head of the outfielders, and hits which seem to be out of the park can hit the top of the outfield wall robbing the batter of a home run.

It is important to remember that this is an arcade game not a simulation (like MICRO LEAGUE BASEBALL). There are only two teams to choose from in HARDBALL and all of the players are fictitious. This doesn't mean they are without personality. As you play the game you will get to know certain player's strengths and weaknesses; power hitters like Rick Miller, and ace relievers like Denny Estrada and Jimmy Morlini. When each batter steps to the plate his statistics are displayed at the bottom of the screen. Statistics are also shown when you are selecting pinch hitters, and relief pitchers. Although these stats do not have 100% accuracy with how the pitchers and batters will play (much of the skill is up to the person playing HARDBALL) they do assist you in making strategic lineup decisions.

I would rate the difficulty level for the game as excellent also. I found I usually beat the computer's team one-third of the time, with the computer winning the other two-thirds. For me that's a very good ratio. It lets me win enough times so I don't get frustrated, and yet I lose enough so I don't feel the game is too easy.

While HARDBALL is an excellent game it is not without a few faults. When playing against the computer, lineup decisions are made almost haphazardly for the opposing team. If a pitcher is doing extremely well, the computer sometimes puts in a relief pitcher for no reason. Conversely, if a pitcher is doing particularly badly, the computer can sometimes leave him in much too long. This problem is of course eliminated when playing against a human opponent. Another problem is one that plagues many computer baseball games. An outfielder can sometimes throw a base runner out after an apparent base hit. While the program somewhat remedies the problem (with excruciatingly slow throws from deep center field) it is not perfect. But as my grandmother used to say "nobody's perfect".

In conclusion I highly recommend HARDBALL. Its excellent graphics and playability would make a fine addition to anyone's library of entertainment software for their 8-bit computer.





Suncom's "Animation Station"

An 8-bit review by Tom Bardenwerper

Back in '85 when I purchased my 800 XL one of my primary reasons for the "toy" was to do computer aided design, better known as CAD. As human nature has it, I bought first and asked questions latter! Much to my dismay, there is very little available in the way of Atari CAD systems. So I played with joystick drawing programs; gag me, BASIC plot-drawto routines; boring, even short keyboard oriented drawing programs; yuck.

During all this, my search for a "user friendly", comprehensive and accurate CAD system only ended in frustration (for both myself and many a patient dealer demonstration). When one day, I went to a local computer store and discovered Animation Station by Suncom. I thought to myself "this is it, this has to be it!" And sure enough, Animation Station is, what I feel, "THE" CAD system for the Atari 8 bit.

Enough of my rambling, I'll get on with it. Animation Station's base unit is your typical touch tablet pad that connects to joystick port 1 on your keyboard. The pad surface has a grid and on each side of the pad are two buttons, (for left or right handed persons) these control the "do" and "undo" comands. Also there is a slot that contains the stylus, simply a blunt insturment for drawing with on the pad surface.

Next there is the program, contained on disk, (for 400, 800, 600XL, 800XL, 1200XL, 130XE) called DESIGN LAB. Once booted, a main menu appears. It is here that the comprehensivness of this system becomes apparent. Design Lab puts a lot of options at your disposal, here are just few:

COLOR: This changes the background and drawing color, a sub color menu will offer you 16 colors and hues, as well as 16 luminances. You have three drawing "brushes" and a mix color comand is available.

BRUSHES: This option chooses the "brush" width, of which, there are seven to choose from.

SKETCH: Draw totally free hand on the screen.

BOX: This will radiate a pulsating rectangle starting where you first touched the stylus down. By moving the stylus you may elongate, flatten or widen the box. Similar command are available for circular shapes with or without a FILL option.

LINE: Line is my favorite, with it you can plot an end point of a line, extend it, and you have a straight line. There are coordinates given on the bottom of the screen so you can draw accurately. This feature is great for designing that gadget you always wanted to make!

SHAPES: Now don't get excited boys, DESIGN LAB comes with a library of "shape tables", each with a set of popular pre-drawn shapes (trees, cars, animals, etc.)

which can be used as a starting point for your illustrations. Shapes is kind of like having an artist's clip art book. One of the more powerful features of the program is the ability to FLIP & ROTATE the viewed shape. You can choose a color for your shape, and you may switch from inverse to regular display. Also, you may scroll through any of the shapes under that specific heading. Unfortunately you are not allowed to save a shape you draw and put it in the shape library.

TEXT: Choose one of five different fonts so you may letter your work. Another nice feature for designers, so you can detail a drawing with specifications.

ZOOM: A truly powerful design tool for any intricate drawing. The zoom option allows you to magnify specific areas of the screen so you can see the relative position of each pixel in that area. Also supported is fast and slow scroll for moving your "lens" across the screen.

PRINT: As if all this isn't enough, Animation Station even supports printers. The machines supported are; Epson w/ Grafrax, Gemini, Panasonic, and Okidata Okimate. The function works great on my emulated Gemini (actually a \$40.00 Big Blue special!) just make sure you have the color/background colors in check or you'll end up with some pretty messed up graphics.

This is by no means a complete list of available functions. There are a lot more!

Without a doubt Animation Station Computer Design Pad & Graphics Program has everything and much more than I ever hoped for in a 8 bit CAD system. It's user friendliness is, well, downright sociable. With it's great resolution and the many features supported, it is accurate and comprehensive. Suncom gets a big "atta-boy" from me, and hopefully other developers will take their lead and produce other fine pieces of material like Animation Station.

Editors note: Like so many computer industry "buzzwords", one needs to be careful when using expressions like CAD, CAD-CAM, Desktop Publishing, and the like. Tom was kind enough to demonstrate this product at our June meeting, and in fairness to those searching for an 8-bit CAD system for business use, this product may not fill your needs. However, after seeing Tom's demonstration of this product, I understand and share his enthusiasm for it. It is a marked improvement over programs like "Atari Artist", and Suncom is to be applauded. [Ed.]



INFOCOM In Hollywood

An 8-bit review by Tom Johnson

Hollywood Hijinx by Infocom
Text Adventure
Overall Difficulty - Medium
Overall Rating - Excellent
Price as Tested - \$25.00

Infocom has done it again. They have come out with another text adventure game that lives up to their past. For those of you that are either new to the computer world or haven't tried one of their games yet, your really missing something. Infocom writers have the ability to describe settings and actions so realistically that you feel like you are there. The best way to understand this is to compare a book with the movie made from it. Sure graphics are nice, but, with writers like these you'll have no trouble using your imagination for picturing places and coming up with ideas.

Buddy and Hildegard Burbank produced many class B movies. The movies enabled them to earn enough money to acquire the mansion they lived in, nicknamed Hildebud. Hildebud, surrounded by beautiful gardens, beach and a hedge maze, became nothing short of a museum for props from their movies. These unusual artifacts accent the many rooms on the grounds and various floors of this novel mansion.

The story opens with you, the favorite of all their nieces and nephews, receiving a letter from aunt Hildegard who has now joined uncle Buddy in paradise. The letter goes on to tell how they agreed some time ago to leave their entire estate to you. However, as you're about to jump for joy, you read that they're not going to just hand all of this to you. It seems that Buddy and Hildegard want to test you to make sure that you're clever enough to maintain the estate they worked for. The test is to find ten treasures, hidden in the mansion and it's surroundings, in one night. Sounds like the old treasure hunt at night in a haunted house story doesn't it? Well, it's not really. Although you do hear footsteps occasionally.

The mansion is decorated in such a way that it instills curiosity and surprise rather than fear. For example, the first prop you encounter is a sculpture of Buck Palace. Upon examining it, you'll find he's wearing, among other things, several belts of ammunition, combat boots and a bayonet between his teeth, while carrying a mail bag over his shoulder. Although not all of the props are as elaborate as this one, they do keep the adventure entertaining and thought provoking.

As for the treasures, you'll be amused at what some of them are. Not only are they not what or where you'd expect, but they're not always easily obtained. Sometimes it takes a few moves, in the correct sequence, to obtain one or maybe just a clue.

The hardest part for me wasn't finding the

treasures, or their clues, but the time limit. By the time I got done trying all of possibilities and examining everything I wanted to, the sun rose, I was out of time and still had a considerable way to go. Personally, I would have enjoyed the game just as much, maybe even more, without a time limit.

Infocom did it's usual great job of descriptive writing which keeps the story both amusing moving at a good pace. Because of their careful attention to details, you're hardly ever without an idea and never have any trouble picturing your surroundings. For the expert or anyone interested in trying their first adventure game, this one's a must.

P.S. - If you want just one little hint read on. I found my printer to be of help at one point of the game.

Listen For MilAtari Meeting Times!

Evenings, the week prior to the meeting on:

WEMP • 1250 AM

THE OLDIES STATION

Our thanks to Mr. Jack Lee and Michael "Bub" Clemens for their gracious assistance. The above logo was captured using IMG Scan and retouched using Degas Elite.



Ask And Ye Shall...

An 8-bit Assessment by Tom Siemietkowski

(Reprinted from Michigan Atari Magazine)

Everything we read today in magazines, periodicals and newsletters is Atari 8-bit, as a computer, is DEAD. How dead it is, is up to the individual computer owner. I have owned mine for about 5 years and have dabbled in basic programming, word processing, spreadsheets, graphics and some gaming. I have been a very active member in my user group for about that long a time. I have seen members come and go, some for a long spell and many for a meeting or two and disappear. Actually, I am quite confused about what people want from this phenomenon called the computer.

For the money, this is by far the all around best computer (not game machine) on the market. About 10 years ago when this computer came out, there were many on the market that have all but disappeared and yet the Atari survives. Let me change that word "survives". I mean "flourishes", if we look at it in the correct perspective. Of all you Atari owners out there, how many of you are very proficient at all its capabilities? I would venture to say very, very few.

What do you want out of your Atari computer?

Is it dead or dying because it cannot do what you want it to do? Is it dead or dying because the new expensive 16-bit machines are faster with better graphics? Or is it dead or dying because you have heard there will be no new software on the market?

This 8-bit machine will do anything the average computer owner will ask of it. Join a user group and ask them if they have some software and you will find out there is enough to keep just about anyone out there busy for many years to come.

Even if there was never one more piece of software written, there would be more than enough around for all of us for many years. By adding a printer to an existing computer and disk drive, a whole new world will open to you with just a handful of public domain programs. That would be an output of about \$250.

As I said before, I am confused. What do you want that this computer can't give you, without spending all that extra money for a big new one? The idea of death for the 8-bit will not be. Dead is dead only if you let it die. There is a lot out there. Just look and ask what you want it to do.



PRINTING

- Photocopies
- Letterheads
- Catalogs
- Newsletters
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ST Clock Cards - Two In Review

A 'Hands-On' Product Evaluation by Dale Phillips

You're working on your computer and all of sudden realize that you forgot to set the date and time to the correct settings so that you know when you made the files you are working on. Now you have to go to the control panel and do the settings or you could purchase a clock card and not worry about the whole deal.

This first review is about the Micro-Tyme clock card. This card comes complete with a set of rechargeable batteries and some nicely made instructions. Upon taking the cover off your ST and then lifting off and disconnecting the keyboard you will find a large IC on the bottom of the keyboard. Remove this chip and plug the clock card in the space that's now open and then plug the chip back into the clock card, after which you plug in the battery pack that comes with it.

Then leave your computer on for a period of 4 to 6 hours to charge the batteries, after which everything should work fine. I did just that and discovered that the clock would not hold the time for more than one day of being turned off. I called the manufacturer and he explained in detail how the product worked and got its power for the batteries. He told me I had a bad logic chip on the board, and that I should send it back for a replacement. I sent it back and ordered 3 more at the same time.

I received the other 3 first and installed them into my friends' machines. I then found out they also did not function properly. Upon talking to the manufacturer again, I learned from him that he had received a whole batch of bad logic chips and that I should send the clocks back for replacement or refund.

My friends wanted a refund. In the meantime however, I sent back one of the cards for a replacement. I was told I would get a good unit that should work. Wrong! It turned out to be as bad as the rest! In this person's opinion it would be wise to stay away from the Micro-Tyme clock card.

The second part of this review is about a second clock card called the "Z-Time" Internal Clock Calender for the ST. This clock card comes from Terrific Peripherals, the makers of the 520 EZ-Ram upgrade, and I must say I am very impressed with this product.

The internal clock comes as a socketed chip with a 10 year lithium battery and a nicely made set of instructions, just like you get with the upgrade.

Installing it is as easy as 1-2-3. Open your computer to get to the motherboard, and then looking at the left side of the motherboard you will see a set of 6 ROM chips. Remove the first or top chip, put the clock card in the open socket, put the rom chip onto the clock card, and put everything back together.

Now take the disk that comes along with the unit and boot it up. At that time you will get a Z-Time

accessory that puts a clock in the upper right hand corner of the screen that says 00:00:00. Now load the Set Time program, and set the clock and activate the battery within the unit. After that, you put two programs from that disk onto all your other disks, and every time you boot up, the internal time and date on the computer will be correct. No need to worry whether you have the date and time set correctly, it's all automatic!

In addition, the clock is accurate to within one minute per month and corrects itself for days in the month and leap years. I really like this product and have installed five so far. No one has complained to me yet of encountering any problems with it.

Editor's Note: Official Policy Statement

One of the functions of this newsletter is to attempt to save Atari owners time and money by pointing out both the good and bad points of Atari related merchandise. Every effort is made to present a factual and accurate assessment of all merchandise reviewed. In the interest of fairness, we welcome responses to reviews by named manufacturers and will make space available to them for rebuttal. We reserve all editorial rights with regards to length and content. [Ed.]

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STadel - Walk-Through II

The SysOp's Korner by Rich Dankert

Last month, I took you all on a walk-through of our new BBS program, STadel. I have since seen many more new faces, both 8-bit and ST, and I welcome you.

So far, we have covered how to log-on and apply for a password, the basic message read functions, and the message enter functions. This month we're going to go on to something new.

File Transfers - File transfers all revolve around the basic Read and Enter commands, with a few additions of course. First we will talk about my favorite; Uploading. There are a few ways to use this function, but I will restrict it to the most common way.

Uploading - The command sequence is .EXB. That's "Period E X B". Now for a little explanation of just what this means. The Period tells the system to expect an Extended command. The E stands for enter. The X stands for Xmodem, and the B stands for Binary File. You need not worry about which type of xmodem to use (CRC or Checksum), as the system supports both. Now, after you have entered this sequence, the system will ask you for a filename. Enter the complete filename, including the extender. Example: MYFILE.ASC. The system will then prompt you for a short explanation. You will have an 80 character limit, so remember to be concise. Now that you have all that accomplished, you have just one more question. The question is whether you are ready or not. When you are ready, answer "Y" to this, and then start your transfer. The systems, (yours and the BBS) will take over until the transfer is over. The BBS will also configure to whatever Xmodem you are using.

Now we're ready for your favorite, **Downloading**. To download from the system, you use the same basic philosophy just substituting the basic Read command in place of the Enter command. The command sequence is .RXB. "Period R X B". The basic explanation is as follows. The period tells the system that there is an Extended command coming. The R stands for Read. The X stands for Xmodem, and the B stands for Binary File. Really quite the same as the Uploading command sequence, except we have replaced the 'E' (for Enter) to 'R' (for Read). The system will then ask you for the filename. You have options here. You can either enter the full filename OR wildcard the file name, like you would through DOS on the 8-bit systems, or with a command line interpreter like you would on the ST. After supplying the filename the system will check to make sure the file exists. Once the system verifies that it does exist, the system will then ask you if you are ready. Set up your system to receive, then tell the system that you are ready with an "Y" at the prompt, and then start your receive. The systems will take over from there, and when finished will return manual control to you.

Ok, now that we have covered the HOW to download, you may be asking; "How do I find out what

is available, and where do I find this information?"

First I must remind you that there are two types of rooms on the system. Message *only rooms, and the directory rooms which also allow messages to be passed. A message *only room is identified by a ">" (greater than symbol). The directory rooms are identified by a "]" (bracket symbol). It is in the directory rooms that you will be able to upload and or download programs.

Now you are asking, "Now that I know where the files are kept, how do I find out what is available?" To do this, you guessed it, requires another command sequence. These also revolve around the basic "Read" command. There are two ways to obtain a directory. There is the ".RD" (Period R D), which equates to Period (extended command) R (Read) D (Directory), and then either a carriage return for the full listing OR you may wildcard it to just look for certain program types, such as .RD *.BAS will bring you a listing of all the basic files only.

There is also another type of listing which will change the sequence a bit. The sequence is .RE (Period R E) which equates to . (Period) for extended command, R for Read, and E for Extended Directory, and either a carriage return for a full extended directory OR you can wildcard this in the same manner.

Now what is an Extended Directory? Well, an Extended Directory is a listing that will, as long as the person that uploaded it left a short description as I have noted previously, give you a little information about the file that's available.

There is another type of Read command that I think I will discuss here. It is the .RF command. Period for extended command, R for Read, and F for file. There are two uses for this command. If the file is *not binary, you can open your capture buffer and issue the command and simply d/l the file in ascii form, OR in the case of a text file usually depicted by a .ASC or .DOC file extender, the system will send the file out to you in your screen format. This means that if you're in 40 column mode such as an Atari 8-bit, the file will come to you formatted so that all words will appear on screen in whole form with no half words. In the case of the same file if you're in 80 column mode, such as the ST, the file will come down to you in 80 column mode in the very same manner.

One more thing about this .RF command. If you happen to see a file in the directory that is a .RLE (run length encoded file) which is usually a picture, simply change your mode from vt-52 (in Flash Alt-m) to Vidtex mode and then issue the command, and you will get the picture displayed on your end.

Well that's about it for this month. I'll let you chew on this for a month and then have another article on STadel-68K, giving you even more on just what this system is really capable of. For now this should suffice, so keep the faith. Till next month. The SysOp.



September Public Domain Additions

ST

DISK # 116 ACCESSORIES

ADDRESS: Address book as an accessory and as a program,
 ALARMCLK: Excellant multi-function clock program,
 FILETOOL: Format, rename, copy files & folders, etc. from within applications,
 GETDEFS: Control panel which doesn't occupy accessory slot,
 INITDISK: Format without prompts from within applications,
 INTRAM: Intersect Ramdisk Ver 4.0,
 PROTECT: Write protect disks through software,
 PRIV_EYE: Accessory for nousey people,
 RAMBUFFER: Combined ramdisk and printer buffer,
 ROCP07: Read Only Control Panel Ver 7,
 ROCP08: Read Only Control Panel Ver 8,
 SCHZO11: Monochrome, hard disk, and low resolution now supported in this version of Schizo, and
 ST_RAM: Printer buffer and ramdisk where size is selected by user.

DISK # 117 GAME

LLANDER: Excellent lunar lander game,
 T_VISION: Tunnel Vision - A first-person, find-your-way-out-of-the-maze game, and
 WHEELPUZ: Wheel of Fortune puzzle on the Beatles.

DISK # 118 UTILITY

FLSHPAT: Adds to dialing capabilities of Flash,
 INVEST: Comprehensive investment tracking template for use with db Man database program,
 PACKIT33: Pack-Et-Term is an extensive terminal program with a very complete, lengthy documentation file,
 TOOLS1: A multi-function utility for aiding in the writing of Basic programs,
 TRIPPLE: Three-across labeler for use with Regent Base,
 TURNKEY: Run autoboot programs from desktop,
 YBATCH: Y-Modem download accessory, and;
 YRASS: Your Assets - A monthly financial statement generator program.

Dennis Wilson
 ST Public Domain Librarian

8-BIT

I would like to introduce myself, my name is Tom Bardenwerper and I am your new 8-bit public domain librarian. As librarian I will try to supply you, our membership, with new and exciting 8-bit programs.

To do this however, I will need your help. Please upload any programs you feel would be of interest into the Atari Forum room on the MilAtari BBS. Leave me E-Mail so I know what's there, and a brief description of its use.

Now for whats happening. Several programs from disks No. 99-103 have been moved in order to make room for some needed handling utilities. These programs have been put onto two new disks. The new disks (No.104-105) will also contain many new programs, so be sure to purchase them up at the September meeting.

The following is a breakdown of disks 104-105.

DISK # 104 UTILITIES

TVTEST: Checks your TV screen.
 FILE42XL: Database.
 VGRAPH: Makes graphs.
 RAMDISK: Use 130XE RamDisk.
 TRAILJOY: Joy stick drawing.
 TRAILPAD: Paddle drawing.
 CALENDAR: Self explanatory. Excellent, check it out!
 VOICER: Voice box project w/diagram.
 ANIMATE: Make custom characters.
 ARTCONVRE: Transfers ASCII character art into hi-res graphics.
 SSCUSTM: Speedscript customizer.

DISK # 105 GAMES

FLOYD: Arcade game.
 SLITHER: Arcade game.
 TELECHES: 2 player chess via a modem.
 AIRATAACK: Arcade game.
 NUCWASTE: Arcade game.
 MAXHEAD: Talk with Max Headroom- almost artificially intellegent.
 STARGUN: Arcade game.
 RATS: Arcade game.

Tom Bardenwerper
 8-bit Public Domain Librarian



Enough is Enough!!

Ltd. Perspectives by Jim Morales, Editor

There have been an awful lot of rather unpleasant things said about Atari Corp. in a number of Atari-dedicated periodicals lately. The majority of these dissertations by supposedly "concerned" individuals were so ill-worded and poorly thought out that they would have been embarrassing to reprint. One individual was so concerned that he copyrighted his gripe lest someone else might profit from his wisdom. Sort of makes you wonder doesn't it?

While there can be no doubt that everyone has an absolute right to air their views, it seems more than passing strange that finally, after bringing Atari back from the brink of dissolution, the user community sees fit to unload with both barrels on the folks that brought it back.

Right, you're upset because the kids in Sunnyvale haven't delivered on time or bent over backwards far enough for your user group. So what! It seems to me that everyone is missing the point. That point being; that it's time to wake up to the fact that it's their train and they can drive it any way they darn well please. If you don't like the ride, get off! This seemingly endless spate of haranguing serves absolutely no purpose other than to make us all look like a bunch of spoiled jerks!

Let's be real clear. I'm not exactly crazy with some of Atari's actions of late either. I can name at least a dozen things I'd like to see Uncle Jack and company change or improve. But I'm darn-sure not going to slap them in the face with it! The "two-by-four" mentality only works with mules. Try it with a multi-million dollar corporation and YOU wind up looking like the jackass! If any of you think you can put out a Mega, a Blitter, or an AMY faster and better, why aren't YOU in business? Some of you armchair CEOs are really a joke. Talk is cheap when it's someone else's money.

Those of you with gripes that think you belong to some kind of "exclusive" group, you have another think coming. Take a look at some of the latest PC mags and observe the shots that Big Blue is taking from those who think the new line is a joke. Boy, I bet IBM is quaking in it's boots!

For those of you suffering from a bad case of "clout mentality", I suggest you wise up and fast. While there is little doubt that a group of two or three hundred customers has a degree of clout when it comes to relations with a company, you need to remember that it is the way in which that clout is applied that determines how successful it is. Street gangs and organized crime have clout too, but given the way in which they apply their clout, I hardly think you'd care to be placed in that category.

You want to make a point with a corporation? Organize yourselves and write to or meet with the company executives. Make it a group effort, not some cheap shots from behind the "skirt" of a newsletter or

a supposedly "Atari supporting" magazine! Act like intelligent, responsible, and concerned consumers and you'll be surprised at the amazing things that can happen! More importantly, if your efforts don't pay off the first time, keep at it until it does pay off. There can be absolutely no excuse for the manner in which some of these "concerned" consumers have run off at the mouth recently.

Sure, Atari Corp. has some problems. But they're back, in the black, and for the most part, very healthy. Plunking down \$67 million for a retail chain is not the sign of a sick company. Atari knows full well the dangers of announcing "vaporware" and what it can do to their bottom line. You'd better believe that Uncle Jack's main priority is the 'bottom line', and it's a good bet he's not exactly crazy about the delays either. Of what possible help then is all this carping? None.

Has anyone bothered to write to Atari Corp. and ask how user groups can help them get the word out when the new goodies finally do arrive? If you have, why haven't you told us about it? If you haven't, why not?

"Hey! Selling computers for Atari isn't our job!" Really? Then quit telling them how to run their damn company! It's one or the other keemo-sabe, you can't have both.

Legitimate concerns by dedicated and loyal consumers presented in a professional and articulate manner are welcomed by any company interested in it's own survival. Atari's interaction on GENIE and elsewhere is more than ample proof that they ARE interested in our concerns. Cheap shots, threats, and useless griping demonstrate a lack of sophistication that doesn't merit a company's attention.

We all have our gripes for one reason or another, it's human nature. That does not negate the fact that each one of those gripes, if legitimate, ought to be addressed. But what makes more sense; a bunch of crying and moaning, or a united effort that we all take part in to ensure that our investment in these machines pays the highest possible dividend? I know, tough question....

The bottom line here friends and neighbors is that an awful lot of time and resources are being wasted on useless carping, when in fact the prime function of a user group or publication is to aid those it serves, not to tell someone else how they should run their company. I would submit that if an equal amount of effort and diligence was put forth in helping Atarians get the most out their machines as has been put into smacking around Atari Corp. of late, a whole lot more people would be a whole lot better off.

If the best that you can do for your membership or readership is engage in juvenile complaining, then perhaps it's time for you get a different machine and get out of our way. The rest of us have work to do.

MilAtari Ltd. User Group & Newsletter Information

MilAtari Ltd. The Milwaukee Area Atari User's Group

MilAtari Ltd. is an independent user education group which is not affiliated with Atari Corp. The newsletter MilAtari Ltd. Edition, is the official publication of MilAtari Ltd., and is intended for the education of its members, as well as for the dissemination of information regarding Atari computer products and related merchandise.

MilAtari membership is open to individuals and families who are interested in using and programming Atari and other types of computers. Membership includes a subscription to this newsletter and access to the club libraries. Annual membership fee is \$20.00 for individuals or \$25.00 per family.

MilAtari Ltd. also operates a 24 hour electronic bulletin board service. This service is available to all computer users at no charge and is for the sole purpose of exchanging information and public domain programs for Atari personal computers. MilAtari Ltd. maintains a strong anti-piracy policy with regards to computer software. The BBS functions at 300/1200 baud and can be reached at (414) 781-5710.

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Submission Policy

Contributions of articles are always welcome. Quite frankly, we thrive on them! Articles may be submitted on either 8-bit or ST diskette, in typewritten form or uploaded directly to the MilAtari Ltd. Bulletin Board System via modem. All submissions must be received no later than the 28th of the month.

Now, we wouldn't ask you to do something for nothing, so it is the policy of MilAtari Ltd. that the authors of articles actually published in the newsletter may select one disk of their choice from either of the club's public domain libraries. You may claim your disk after the actual publication of the newsletter and arrange for obtaining it by contacting the appropriate librarian listed in the column to the left. This applies to club members only.

You will also have our undying thanks!



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